

Dan Monroe
Director, Peabody Essex Museum
121 Essex St.
Salem, MA 01970

Dear Mr. Monroe:

I write both in my capacity as president of the American Historical Association and as a historian of early America who has used the collections of the Phillips Library to research four of my five single-authored books. The AHA, as I'm sure you are aware, is the largest organization of historians in the United States, with more than 12,000 members.

The AHA was contacted by a member who has been concerned about the recently announced plans for the future of the Phillips Library. Based on our inquiries, the elected officers of the Association have concluded that your plans for the preservation of the important historical materials held by the library, both books and manuscripts, are commendable as they have been described to us.

But we remain concerned about access to those materials, both at the new facility in Rowley when it opens this spring and at the original library in Salem. As you and all historians working on the library's holdings know, the reduced staffing and hours at the library in recent years have caused researchers many difficulties. From the AHA's perspective, maintaining adequate opening hours and retaining knowledgeable professional staff are key to the Phillips Library's successful future. Its collections are of national, even international, significance, and it would be tragic if the necessary renovations to the original buildings caused permanent disruptions to access to the collections.

We will follow the news about the reopening of the library with great interest.

Sincerely yours,



Mary Beth Norton
President, American Historical Association